

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

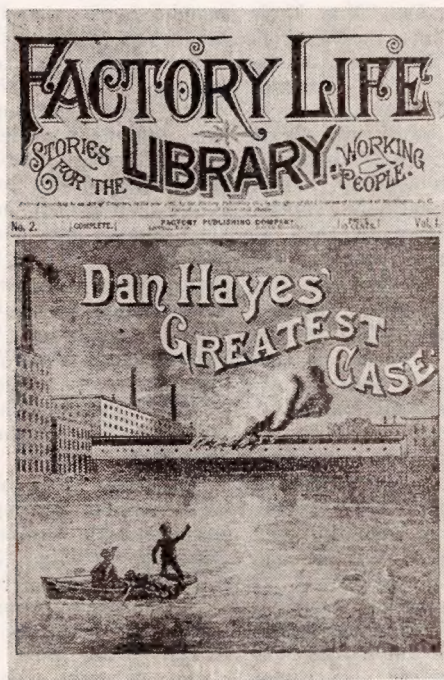
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New York Boys' Library Published by Norman L. Munro

By Rhoda Gay Walgren



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 136

FACTORY LIFE LIBRARY

Publisher: Factory Publishing Co., 48 Central St., Lowell, Mass. Issues: 5 (highest number seen advertised). Dates: March 1887 to July 1887. Schedule of Issues: Monthly. Size: 12x9 in. Pages: 24. Price: 10c. Illustrations: Black and white cover. Contents: Stories of New England factory life. Stories were later reprinted in Hub 10c Novels and Yankee Library.

New York Boys' Library Published by Norman L. Munro

By Rhoda Gay Walgren

This article was prepared and written by Miss Walgren as a thesis towards the attainment of a Master of Arts Degree in Library Science at the University of Minnesota.

Norman L. Munro, publisher of the New York Boys' Library and brother of George Munro, another publisher of dime novels, was born in the small town of Millbrook in Pictou County, Nova Scotia in 1843. He was fifty-one at the time of his death in 1894. His early life was spent on a farm until he decided to try his luck in the city, New York, during 1864.^{1,2} At this point two of the obituaries of Munro's death differ. The "New York Herald" states that once in the metropolis "he began at the bottom of the ladder in a printing office, resolved to some time become the head of a firm of his own,"³ while the "New York Evening Post" says he "obtained employment in a publishing house, where he remained until he started the Family Story Paper in 1873 at No. 169 William Street."⁴ We are not told who his first employer was, but "from about 1867 to 1869," Norman was employed, "in the office of the Fireside Companion, where George (his brother) saw to it that he addressed wrappers and mailed papers."⁵

Throughout this early part of his career Norman Munro was watching, learning and mastering the details of the publishing business. For a time he had a book-binding business,⁶ and by the early 1870's he felt he had learned enough about publishing so "by practicing the strictist economy, he amassed a sum of money sufficient to start himself in the publishing business on a small scale."⁷ His first

attempts at publishing were under the name Ornum, Munro spelled backward and consisted of: Ornum & Co.'s Ten Cent Popular Novels, Ornum & Co.'s Ten Cent Indian Novels, Ten Cent Claude Duval Novels, Ornum & Co.'s Fifteen Cent Romances, The Black Highwaymen Novels, The Boy's Own Novels and a series of song and joke books.

In September 1873, there was a financial panic caused by inflation, extravagant living and wild speculation which finally led to the memorable "Black Friday" when Wall Street changed into pandemonium and rich men became poor men overnight. "In spite of such a general economic disaster, Mr. Munro set to work in the narrow, cramped building, 169 William Street, and from there sent out the first edition of his paper,"⁸ "The Family Story Paper." There is some disagreement as to the exact address, but the author of "Contemporary Biographies of New York," a friend of Norman's, gives the address as 163 William Street.⁹ The "Weekly Story Teller" was another paper Munro started in 1873.¹⁰

At some time between 1873 and 1875, trouble developed between Norman and his brother George. Mary Noel, in "Villains Galore," reports:

In 1873 Norman began his "Family Story Paper," and soon afterward the two brothers were glaring at each other from fine buildings on the opposite sides of Vandewater

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Street. When one of these brothers was not suing Beadle or Tousey or Street & Smith, the two of them were suing each other. Norman twice sued George for copying from him the name "Munro Publishing House." He claimed that George had done so deliberately, in order to receive Norman's orders and send them back with such words as: We do not carry the goods you request.¹¹

However, Albert Johannsen states in "The House of Beadle and Adams" that "Norman Munro began his 'Boys of New York' in 1875, taking from his brother George his editor, George Small, and starting the bitter feud between the brothers."¹²

The year 1876 brought destruction to Munro's publishing establishment at 28 and 30 Beekman Street in New York. At this time "The Family Story Paper," "The Boys of New York," started in August, 1875, "Our Boys," started December of 1875,¹³ "Girls of To-Day," "The Last Sensation," etc. were being published.¹⁴ Fire broke out about half past eleven in the evening of February 2nd, but the flames were extinguished and the firemen left. There was only about \$200 damage done. The flames broke out again at 30 Beekman Street at 7:00 a.m. the next morning doing much more damage to the buildings. This time the loss was estimated at \$40,000 to \$50,000 with \$16,000 insurance coverage.^{15,16} By March 27, 1876, he had moved to 74 Beekman Street.¹⁷

Few story papers in America before the "Boys of New York" were devoted to the young boys, but as early as 1867, the "Boys of England" was publishing exclusively for the younger readers.¹⁸ Then,

after "Boys of New York" and "Our Boys" had made their mark in circulation and had built up a reserve of completed stories, Norman L. Munro needing a series in which to publish these completed serials, started the "New York Boys' Library." No publisher at that time would consider leaving any story out of print for any length of time. The "New York Boys' Library" in addi-

tion to serving as a vehicle for publishing serials appearing in the Munro story papers reprinted stories from English periodicals including Dickens and Marryat novels.¹⁹ Munro published the New York Boys' Library for less than a year, but it is impossible to tell the exact date of the last issue, number 138. It was sold sometime in June or July of 1878, to Tousey and Small. George G. Small edited the "Boys of New York" from the first issue, August 23, 1875, up to thirty days before he began his own "New York Boys' Weekly" with Frank Tousey, March 17, 1877.²⁰ The "American Bookseller" for June 15, 1878, states:

The enterprising young firm of publishers, Tousey & Small, have lately purchased from Norman L. Munro his entire juvenile business, including the well-known boys' papers, The Boys of New York and Our Boys. These will be consolidated. Our Boys with the Young Men of America [published from September 13, 1877 to July 11, 1878 by Norman Munro], and the New York Boys' Weekly, with the Boys of New York. This gives Messrs. Tousey & Small almost the entire field in juvenile papers of this class, and the promise that the new papers shall be much superior to the old ones.²¹

However, the advertisement for number 138 did not appear until July 1, 1878, when the complete list of titles was advertised for the last time under Munro's name. Tousey did not start reissuing the first titles under the Wide Awake Library name, which the New York Boys' Library became, until September 7, 1878. Beginning July 22, 1878, Tousey & Small took over the publication of the "Boys of New York" after they had merged it with the "New York Boys' Weekly."²² Thus, it is almost impossible to arrive at a set date for the sale. After a short time Tousey became the sole owner, January 27, 1879, and George G. Small continued on as a writer. The Wide Awake Library ran to 1437 issues (1353 issues and 84 substitutes) when it made its last appearance January 7, 1898. Then "two weeks later the

new colored series, Pluck and Luck made its appearance and continued the Wide Awake Library tradition for another 30 years."²³

The Riverside Library, begun shortly before the New York Boys' Library, was published until some time in 1879. A few of Munro's other publications between the years 1877-1888 were: Munro's Library, sold to John W. Lovell in 1888 for a reported quarter of a million dollars;²⁴ Old Cap Collier Library, Munro's Pocket Magazine, the Union Square Library, Munro's Musical Library, Munro's Opera Series and Munro's Handy Books. The "New York Family Story Paper" was still being published while the "Golden Hours" began its long run January 28, 1888.

Munro married Miss Henrietta Hume of Brooklyn in 1877²⁵ and they had two children, a boy Henry, ten at the time of his father's death, and a daughter, Norma, thirteen.²⁶ During his life Norman was

fond of sports of the turf and the water. He owned several good trotters, and though a patron of the track never raced any of his horses which he kept for his pleasure only. But it was as an owner of fast steam yachts that he became very widely known. He built the first one, the Norma, in 1883. This was a regular palace, 150 feet long. He afterward disposed of it and ordered another smaller fast steam launch, the Now Then. The Say When and the Henrietta, a little launch that beat Jay Gould's fast yacht Atalanta off Shelter Island, followed the Say When. He owned also at the time of his death the Norwood, with a record of thirty miles an hour, sixty-three feet over all and canopy topped; and the So So, also a fast little yacht, and the Vamoose. He intended that each of his boats should be the fastest of its kind afloat.²⁷

His wealth has been estimated at between \$3,000,000 to \$5,000,000 from his publication interests.²⁸

For a period in 1894, Norman Munro had not worked due to rheumatism, though by February he had recovered sufficiently to return to work. He was

stricken with an appendicitis attack on Tuesday and an operation was performed, but he died about 6:20 p.m. on Friday, February 24th, at the Hoffman House. His brother George had left to go home a few minutes before Norman died. Henry, similarly taken ill at the same time as his father, recovered.²⁹ This brought to an end the career of a man who had for almost a generation competed with such well known publishers of dime novels and related materials as George Munro, Beadle and Adams, Frank Tousey, Street and Smith, Robert Bonner, James Elverson and others.³⁰

Notes

1—"Norman L. Munro," New York Evening Post, February 26, 1894, p. 5, column 3.

2—"Munro dies after a brief illness," New York Herald, February 25, 1894, p. 11, column 1.

3—Ibid., 11.

4—New York Evening Post, p. 5.

5—Mary Noel, "Villains Galore . . . The Heyday of the popular story weekly" (New York, 1954), p. 124.

6—Ibid., 124.

7—(Obituary), New York Times, February 25, 1894, p. 1, column 5.

8—New York Evening Post, p. 5.

9—Young-Jin Kim, "A Study of Golden Hours" (Minneapolis, 1963), p. 3. (Six credit starred paper for the University of Minnesota's Library School).

10—Ralph F. Cummings, "The History of Old Story Papers of Long Ago," Dime Novel Round-up, September, 1950, p. 66-67.

11—Noel, p. 124-125.

12—Albert Johannsen, "The House of Beadle and Adams" (Norman, 1950-62), vol. 1, p. 61.

13—"Grand Conflagration at the Munro Plant in 1876," Dime Novel Round-up, December, 1938, p. 2.

14—"The Beekman Street Fire," New York Sun, February 4, 1876, p. 3, column 5.

15—Ibid.

16—(Fire), New York Times, February 4, 1876, p. 8, column 3.

17—Robert A. De Young, "The First Fifteen Years of the New York Family Story Paper" (Minneapolis, 1964),

p. 2-3. (Six credit starred paper for the University of Minnesota's Library School).

18—Edward T. LeBlanc, "Bibliographic Listing of Boys of New York" (Fall River, Mass., 1965), p. 4.

19—Ibid.

20—"Dime Novel Facts," Dime Novel Round-up, January, 1932, p. 6.

21—American Bookseller, June 15, 1878, p. 509.

22—LeBlanc, p. 3.

23—Edward T. LeBlanc, "Bibliographic Listing of Wide Awake Library" (Fall River, Mass., 1964), p. 5.

24—Raymond Howard Shove, "Cheap Book Production in the United States, 1870 to 1891" (Urbana, Illinois, 1937), p. 67.

25—Kim, p. 8.

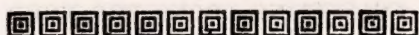
26—New York Herald, p. 5.

27—Ibid.

28—Ibid.

29—Ibid.

30—William L. Beck, "Norman L. Munro, Publisher," Dime Novel Round up, January, 1934, p. 1.



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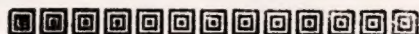
D - J Books

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San Bernardino, Calif. 92404

**YOUR WANTS LIST IS
INVITED.**

(We buy too!)



MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

- 115. Herbert E. Kenney, Cedar Croft, Belmont Ave., Belfast, Maine 04915 (New address)
- 158. J. Randolph Cox, RR 1, Northfield, Minn. 55057 (New address)
- 327. Pasadena Main Library, 285 E. Walnut St., Pasadena, Calif. 91106 (New member)
- 328. Paul Landfried, Box 10570, Orlando, Fla. 32808 (New member)
- 329. Hon. Clarence A. Southerland, 1 Red Oak Road, Wilmington, Del. 19806 (New member)
- 330. S. E. Wallen, 215 N. 28th St., Camden, N. J. 08105 (New member)
- 331. Paul A. Dentz, 251 Madison Ave., Wyckoff, N. J. 07481 (New member)

FOR SALE

**Wide Awake and Wild West Weeklies, Work and Win, Pluck and Luck,
runs.**

Send wants.

JEFF STASI

42 Greenwood Road, Murray Hill, N. J. 07974

COLLECTING BOOKS FOR YOUR KIDS TO READ

By Jack R. Schorr

This is great. It gives you an excuse for collecting, even if you don't have a son, your grandson will be one you can point to and say, "I collect books so he can read them." If you don't have any children, I am sure your neighbors do. How about your wife? And if she can't read, well?

I was sure my kids would enjoy the Merriwells I used to read. I would never miss the opportunity to tell them about some exciting plot in the Merriwell series which captivated me as a boy. I would dig through and find that particular story and hand it to my boy. I would find the book weeks later and he still hadn't gotten around to reading it. This damaged my ego, because I felt these books that I enjoyed should be enjoyed by him. Something like a father wanting his son to follow in his footsteps and become a lawyer, and being hurt because he chose to drive a truck. So I hit upon the idea of moving my collection into his bedroom. I had some shelving built in a nice looking hutch and in went my nice Stratemyers, Standish and Pattens, etc. Hoping that under the watchful eyes of Dave Porter and Frank Merriwell that interest would be generated. They looked so nice, too. His Tom Swift Jr. we relegated to a bureau drawer, along with the later Hardy Boys. There were the Tom Swifts, Rover Boys, etc. nice and bright, sure to catch the eye, row upon row on nicely painted shelves which cost—oh well, it was worth it if it did the trick. I would ask my wife, "Fran, have you noticed Rick reading any of the books?" "Yes," she replied, "I think I saw him reading a Tom Swift yesterday." "Was it a yellow cover or blue?" I would inquire excitedly. "Blue, I think," she replied. My heart would sink. Tom Swift Jr. again, and not the originals. Oh well, I would rationalize, that's pretty close and a lot better than "Rod Harmon's Other Wife."

Some time later, when I was in their room, I noticed a whole row of Rover Boys missing and in their place were some model cars. Looking around, I found them in a corner of the closet. I wonder if this would have disheartened the fun loving Rovers? Well, model making is only a phase and I will think of something.

A month later, Frank Merriwell ended up in the closet, to be replaced by a fleet of model ships.

I had a room out back and I started some time ago to put some of the non-series juveniles in there. I finally took Rover Boys and Frank Merriwell out there. Could it be, that my kids just weren't interested? I just couldn't believe it. After all—

Yes, it took awhile to discover their interest was elsewhere. These stories that I love was not applicable to them, or so they thought.

In going over the books that I removed from the shelves in their room, I was horrified to find that a good copy of "Young Bandmaster" by Bonehill had the center cut out, just the size of a package of cigarettes. Capt. Ralph Bonehill would turn over in his grave. Such desecration! I don't think I bought the book that way.

I wonder if they would be interested in "The Motor Boys"; they crossed the country without mention of filling up on gas, and I know the boys love cars. I'll mention it to them at dinner tonight.

Jack R. Schorr

853 S. Lemon St.

Anaheim, Calif. 92805

WANTED

Golden Days, Volume 16 and 18. Must be complete either in loose or bound voile. Also interested in Good News story paper, any volume from 1 to 15. Harper's Young People, Vol. 1, 2, 3, 4, 11, 12, and 13. Interested in all other story papers. State price. Also Tip Top Weekly No. 102.

Arthur N. Carter

13B Falmouth St.

Attleboro, Mass. 02703

RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES CONCERNING DIME NOVELS

NEW ORLEANS TIME-PICAY-
UNE. Sunday, February 21, 1971. —
CARTER'S CARNIVAL CAPER, by
Ray Samuel. A review of a Nick Car-
ter Adventure which culminated at
the Mardi Gras in New Orleans. Art-
icle features the cover of Nick Carter
Weekly No. 676 illustrating a Mardi
Gras scene. (Sent in by W. R. John-
son)

EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr. LeBlanc: Association with
your group has been a real pleasure—
very nostalgic and in a way fun.
Thanx so much.—L. T. O'Desky, M.D.

NOTE

Another mention of Alger was
made in TV Guide, this time in the
March 13, 1971 issue, in connection
with today's drug problem.

FOR SALE

Liberty and Punch Magazine
for sale cheap.

Eli A. Messier

Box 1122, Woonsocket, R. I. 02895

OLD PULP MAGAZINES WANTED

Such as Doc Savage, Shadow, Spider,
Unknown, Phantom, Western Story,
Wild West, G-8, Wings, "spicy" mags
and many others in the all-fiction
field. Must be in excellent condition.
What have you? Send list and price
wanted. No comics or books.

Back Numbers

Box 214, Little Rock, Ark. 72203

Back numbers, Reckless Ralph's Dime
Novel Roundup Nos. 1 to 237 inclu-
sive. A number of reprints in the low-
er numbers (can't be helped). Also
two indexes, novel catalogue, birthday
number and the one number pub-
lished of Pioneer and Scouts of the
Old West. Single issues, 10c each.

All for \$24.00. Can you beat it.

Ralph F. Cummings

161 Pleasant St., So. Grafton, Mass.

FOR SALE

Merriwell stories in Tip Top Weekly.
Early and late numbers. Send want
list; too many to catalog. Good con-
dition and reasonable prices. Also, in
clothbound first and later editions,
stories by Sir Rider Haggard.

GUINON

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FOR SALE

Old hard cover boys' books, 50c to \$1.00 each.

Also miscellaneous fiction (detective, adventure, western, science-fiction, etc.)
Old pulp magazines and E. R. Burroughs.

Reasonable.

Lists for stamp.

State interests.

Harry K. Hudson

3300 San Bernardino Street, Clearwater, Florida 33515

ATTENTION OLD TIMERS

Advanced collector of boy's old juveniles needs following hardbacks to complete his library. When quoting, supply publisher, (date if given), condition and price. Many of these I already have, but I am endeavoring to better edition or condition or both.

HORATIO ALGER

Victor Vane — Porter & Coates
Tom Turner's Legacy — Burt
Brave and Bold — Loring
Facing the World — Porter & Coates
Falling in with Fortune — Mershon
Frank's Campaign — Loring
From Farm to Fortune — Stitt
Nelson the Newsboy — Mershon
The Store Boy — Porter & Coates
Strive & Succeed — Loring
The Train Boy — Carleton
Young Book Agent — Stitt
Young Miner — Loring

EDWARD ELLIS

True Blue — Dana Estes

HARRY CASTLEMON

The Rod and Gun Club
Marcy the Refugee
The Houseboat Boys
The Mystery of Lost River Canyon
The Young Gun Warden

JAMES OTIS

Left Behind, or Ten Days a Newsboy
Across the Delaware
At the Siege of Quebec
On the Kentucky Frontier
Jerry's Family
With Porter in the Essex
Andy's Ward — Penn 1895
Teddy & Carrots
Corporal Lige's Recruit
Admiral of Spurwink — Bradley
How the Twins Captured a Hessian — Crowell

W. O. STODDARD

Making Good in the Village
Success Against Odds
The Clue at Crow's Corner
Tom Dexter Goes to School
Talking Leaves — Harper & Bros. 1882

GEORGE A. WARREN

The Banner Boy Scouts on a Tour — C&L
The Banner Boy Scouts Afloat — C&L
The Musket Boys on the Delaware—C&L (gold letters only)
The Musket Boys of Old Boston—C&L (gold letters only)

(See December, January and February Roundups for other titles wanted)

LEO F. MOORE — 16412 Gentry Lane — Huntington Beach, Calif. 92647